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ABSTRACT

This report describes a 12-week program designed to increase time on task for kindergarten students. Members of a targeted group of kindergarten students were identified as being off task an average of 1.9 times more than the rest of the class. A program that incorporated the dominant learning styles of students in the target group with kindergarten activities was created. The objectives of the study were that at the end of 12 weeks, the target group would: (1) remain on task at least 20 percent of the time; (2) show 20 percent improvement in performance in kindergarten activities; (3) increase by two or more the number of satisfactory ratings on the work habits section of the Kindergarten Student Progress Report; and (4) participate in activities to increase critical thinking skills. The results revealed a 20 percent increase for time on task for the target group and a noticeable improvement in performance in kindergarten activities. The third objective was met by all of the target group members except for one, and the criteria for the fourth objective was met by all. It was concluded that the use of students' dominant learning styles in the planning and carrying out of activities can bring about an increase in time on task. Appended are related materials and a list of 16 references. (GLR)

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INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF TIME ON TASK FOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS THROUGH THE USE OF LEARNING STYLES

by

Carolyn R. Vallarta

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A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education, Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be place in a National Database System for reference.

June/1991

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Abstract

Increasing The Amount of Time On Task For Kindergarten Students Through The Use Of Learning Styles.
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Descriptors: Primary Education/ Kindergarten Students/ Learning Styles/ Time On Task/ Attention Span/ Modality-Based Instruction/

This report describes a program developed and implemented to increase time on task for kindergarten students. A targeted group of kindergarten students were identified as being off task 1.9 times more than the rest of the class. The writer created a program incorportating the targeted groups dominant learning styles with kindergarten activities over a 12 week period. The results indicated an increase of 20 percent more time on task for the target group. It was concluded by using the student's dominant learning style in planning and carrying out kindergarten activities, an increase in time on task can be achieved. Appendices include PREP Instructional Plan for Kindergarten, biweekly log, letter to principal, letter to kindergarten students parents, kindergarten pre/post activity, teacher checklist and time sweeps results.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed: _____

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Background

The practicum study took place in a kindergarten class which was housed in an elementary school (kindergarten through grade 5). Five hundred ninety students were enrolled at this school with 60 staff members. With the exception of four Exceptional Student Education classes, a first grade, and a third grade class, each grade level was comprised of four classes. Each of the four kindergarten classes contained 24 students.

The school was unique in its approach to parent/school involvement. In 1984 the school changed from a regular elementary school to one where basics of learning was stressed. The additional component of parent involvement was also added. In order for a student to attend this school, the parents signed a contract stating that they would attend all Parent Teacher Organization meetings and participate in related activities. A minimum of nine volunteer hours per school year was also agreed upon. Due to this, parent interaction with the school was high. Commitments/agreements for students as well as teachers were also signed in an effort to promote responsibility, a positive self-image, and a cohesiveness necessary for

involvement by all those attending the school.

The socioeconomic status of students attending this school was comprised of mostly middle class. The percentage of minorities totaled 30 percent which was the required percentage for this school.

Of the four kindergarten classes, one class had two teachers so far for the 1990-91 school year. The first teacher was a permanent substitute and taught the class from the beginning of the school year until October. At that time, due to budgetary cuts within the county, a specialist's position was eliminated and this person was placed in this class with the intent to teach it for the remainder of the school year. The current teacher was certified in elementary education and mentally handicapped and had eleven years teaching experience. The writer believed the change in teachers for this kindergarten class was an added factor in this practicum.

A close look at this class revealed that seven out of the 24 students in the kindergarten class were having great difficulty in maintaining attention and time on task in the classroom. All seven in the target group were male. One of the seven was known to the writer via developmental screening performed three years ago of which no developmental delays were found. Members of the target group ranged in age from five years, six months to six years, four months. One of the seven students in this group had corrective heart surgery.

This particular student's heart functions at 75 percent capacity and must not become overly exerted in physical activities.

The writer was a Child Find teacher for a county school system. The primary responsibility of this teacher was to identify and locate preschoolers at risk for developmental delays. The writer administered developmental screenings on children ages birth through five. Once a child entered kindergarten, the writer had no more responsibility regarding placement and/or intervention.

Problem Statement

Teacher observation revealed the target group had difficulty attending to task, staying in seats, and appeared lost in large group activities. Interventions which had been put into use by the teacher included: re-arrangement of classroom physical setting (tables, student's desks moved), the placement of the target group in closer proximity to teacher during specific lessons, as well as physical prompts where the teacher placed her hand on one of the students shoulder. The latter intervention was meant to help the student who had an extremely limited attention span and was in need of a physical prompt to help maintain focus on the task at hand. A behavior management home program was initiated with one member of the target group. After two weeks, some improvement had been noted in time on task behavior in this particular student.

An additional strategy included pulling the target group members for tutoring two times a week for 45 minutes. Since this had just been initiated, results of this intervention were not known by the writer.

In a time on task sweep of the entire class, results revealed that members of the target group were off task more than on task as compared to the rest of the students in the class. In a 35 minute period, the target group was found to be on task an average of 3.7 times as compared to the rest of the class having an average of 5.9 times on task. Thus, a discrepancy gap of 2.2 was found in the target groups performance of on task behavior.

In a second time on task sweep of the entire class, the target group was found to be on task an average of 3.8 times as compared to the rest of the class on task 5.5 times. Therefore, a discrepancy gap of 1.7 for the target group was revealed. The reader should note in between the first time on task sweep and the second sweep (one week), the teacher re-arranged the classroom seating. This rearrangement saw three of the seven target group members being moved to a different location in the classroom. Totalling the data from both time on task sweeps brought an average time on task for the target group to 3.8 as compared to the rest of the class being on task 5.7 times, leaving a discrepancy gap of 1.9.

In reviewing the PREP checklist of social/emotional/behavioral

development for kindergarten (Appendix A:41) which had been administered to the class early in the school year, the writer found each of the seven members of the target group had difficulties in task related behavior. All seven were frequently out of the seat, three had difficulty staying on task for reasonable periods of time, and three had difficulty concentrating. Only two students from the remaining 17 students in the class had exhibited task related behavior difficulties when the checklist was administered.

Two of the seven target group members had been before the Student Study Team. This team consisted of a guidance counselor, curriculum resource teacher, school social worker, psychologist, teacher of class, and principal. It was a team which reviewed individual student cases following a completed packet by the teacher and makes specific recommendations. These recommendations can be strategies the teacher could use. Further testing of the student was often recommended to see if placement needed to be changed (i.e. exceptional student placement).

The students were referred to the Student Study Team for having difficulty staying on task or for being out of seat frequently. Anecdotals were written by the teacher for two months on the students to document this behavior as well as parent/teacher/guidance counselor contacts. Interventions the

teacher had used were also documented on all these cases. Following a Student Study Team discussion on one of the students, recommendations included: a social history be taken, referral to medical review board, further academic testing, and a language/speech/hearing evaluation be administered. The case would be reviewed following the completion of the medical review. In this particular case, the issue of prescribed medication had been addressed but it was reported that student's doctor disagreed with this approach. Three other members of the target group had also been before the Student Study Team but for discussion only.

On the Kindergarten Student Progress Reports for the second marking period, the target group was found to have more Needs Improvement (N) under the Work Habits section than the rest of the class. Seven areas are listed in this section which are as follows:

1. listens to and follows directions,
2. is attentive in a large group,
3. works without disturbing others,
4. completes work in a reasonable length of time,
5. tries to do his/her best,
6. works cooperatively with others, and
7. takes care of personal and room materials.

One of the target group members had three N's, five had five N's, and another had six N's on the progress report. This was compared to the rest of the 17 class members having all Satisfactories (S) with the exception of four students who had one N indicated in this section of

the progress report. Therefore, a discrepancy gap existed between what was ideal which was less or no N's on the students progress report in the Work Habits section.

When looking at possible underlying causes of the problem, the writer noted a little less than one third of the entire kindergarten class made up the target group. This was a high percentage when looking at a class of 24 students. Besides this factor, the class started the year with a permanent substitute and after two months, another teacher came in to teach the class. Other factors noted were with specific members of the target group. One student exhibited the behavior of a child who had been prenatally exposed to drugs, although no documentation had been found to support this. Another student coming from a split home, spent part of the week with his mother and another part with his father and stepmother. This could create inconsistencies and also confusion on the part of the student. Another member of the target group was unsure of his real last name as his mother used one name and the student another. The writer noted when reviewing the student's folder several last names were seen on the student's records.

In order to succeed in kindergarten, the student must be able to remain on task for a specific period of time in order for learning to take place. When the student has problems in this area, learning is

interrupted. For a kindergartner, the average expected time on task is 20 minutes, dependant upon the activity. Success in kindergarten is crucial as it can be a clear indicator of future academic success. The writer's intent was by providing specific strategies to the target group, success would be achieved in keeping the group on task for a longer period of time.

Outcome Objectives

In this practicum study the writer determined first the primary learning style for each member of the target group. The learning styles of the target group which were not predominant would also be addressed. These learning styles (i.e. visual, auditory, kinesthetic) would be incorporated into specific activities during the implementation period. Less dominant learning styles needed addressing in order for exposure to occur. By integrating the least used modalities, the student would be given opportunities to further strengthen these areas.

The objectives of this practicum study were as follows:

1. After a 12 week period, target group will remain on task 20 percent of the time or longer as measured by a time on task sweep of the entire class.
2. At the end of 12 weeks, the target group will have shown 20 percent improvement in performance on kindergarten activities as

measured by a teacher made checklist.

3. At the end of 12 weeks, the target group will have increased the number of Satisfactories (S) from two or more on the Work Habits section of the fourth grading period of the Kindergarten Student Progress Report.

4. After participation in the 12 week implementation period, 100 percent of the targeted kindergarten group will have participated in activities to increase critical thinking skills as measured by direct observation of the writer.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

According to Kitto (1991), the learning styles of a kindergarten student are not fully established. Kindergartners are still going through developmental stages and the specific learning style is in a state of development and transition. She further states when looking at learning styles, one must not stop at the specific modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) but also incorporate knowledge of right and left brain side learners. Kindergartners function primarily out of the right brain side which is the more spontaneous, creative, non-sequential, and non-orderly side.

Environmental factors and the physical needs of children must also be addressed per Kitto. If there is too much noise, too much light or too little light, this will affect how the child learns. Some children are able to handle more stimuli than others but each individual child's needs should be looked at when placed in a learning situation (i.e. classroom).

Kitto further reports there are four types of learners. The first type of learner needs approval for everything, whether it is from a parent or teacher. The second learner type is one who likes to learn, desires

information, likes tests, and doesn't like group work. The third type of learner is independent, wants hands on experiences, needs to be actively involved in learning and wants a reason for doing so. The fourth and last type of learner is dynamic, creative, intuitive, likes to work with people and share information. This learner's mind is racing fast and when given a project, will proceed to forge ahead with it. Kitto reports learner types two and three do well in school with learner types one and four not as well in the classroom situation. Kindergartner's tend to be types one and four. Because of this, the teacher needs to balance out the classroom routine and not have unreasonable expectations for the students, especially if it is a kindergarten class. Flexibility of the teacher is of primary concern as if the teacher is very structured in her approach to teaching and demanding the students to follow suit, major difficulties may result. "Maybe we aren't teaching right - we're learning disabled" (Kitto, 1991). Often students having problems with learning are sent for testing and possibly labeled learning disabled when the base of the problem may exist in the teacher's teaching style and how it affects the students.

It is important for teachers to discern how to have the students succeed in class per Kitto. Some students may need to be partnered with another student in participating in an activity while other

students do best working in isolation. For those students involved in an activity together, the fear of failure isn't present due to this buddy system. Right brain students can be provided with strategies to encourage left brain usage (i.e. problem solving, creative thinking, higher order questioning). Since kindergartners are mostly functioning out of the right brain, Kitto believes teachers through the use of specific activities can tap into the left brain. In doing so at the same time, it is very important to draw upon past experiences of the student and to instill a need in order for the student to have a desire to learn.

Vitale (1982) concurs with Kitto in stating the majority of educational experiences a child is exposed to is mostly through a left brain focused curriculum. "Many children starting kindergarten have not developed a motor or hand dominance. Their hemispheres are still in the process of some form of specialization or lateralization" (Vitale, 1982:7). Therefore, it is important for educators to take a holistic approach when teaching kindergartners and incorporate more concrete and /manipulatives into the curriculum.

"Each hemisphere of the brain is associated with certain thinking traits, and therefore, certain learning styles" (Freeley and Perrin, 1987:67). In order to provide instruction to both right and left brain

preferenced students, the teacher must make changes in the approach to lessons. "One solution: Introduce the topic to the entire class, alternating your teaching style between an analytical, step-by-step approach and a global, holistic approach. Then provide your students with alternatives" (Freeley and Perrin, 1987:69). When the students are allowed a choice in performing activities, accommodation will have been made to both types of learners; whether left or right brain preferenced.

Elkind points out how important it is for educators to realize and understand children have individual ways of learning. "...the education of young children must be in keeping with their unique modes of learning" (Elkind, 1986:631). Parents as well as educators must understand this in order for the child not to come under an undue amount of stress. Stress can lead to failure in an early childhood program which forces the child to learn in a specific manner.

"By contrast, young children in a sound program of early childhood education have the support of activities nicely suited to their learning styles" (Elkind, 1986:635). By allowing the child to explore and use learning styles most applicable, success and a feeling of self-worth can be achieved.

A study was performed in 1983 by Day and Drake (1986) to learn the relationships between early childhood classroom environments and on task behavior rates of children. It was found when the classroom housed eight or more learning centers, used contracts (pictorial and written plans for students day), and who had children ages five and six in the class, had an on task behavior rate of 92 percent. The study also looked at classes just having five year olds alone but also having the same amount or more of learning centers and contracts. These classes had an on task behavior rate of 85 percent.

> These results suggest that a complex early childhood environment featuring learning centers in conjunction with an appropriate management system can achieve rates of on-task behavior higher than those achieved in less complex classrooms that rely on large and small group instruction and seat work assignments (Day and Drake, 1986:27).

A kindergarten class (Albert 1990) was observed by the writer early in the school year. The writer noted how Albert used specific short questions addressed to the students in order to maintain control and keep the students on task. These questions were used to help the students focus on the activity at hand and also act as an impetus for problem-solving on the student's part. Albert (1991) reported to the writer that there are students in the class who specifically are having problems staying on task at the present time. An alternate task or

activity is given to these students which provides the same result. For example, a student having difficulty with staying on the task of writing the letter C would be given clay in order to make a C. In Albert's class, students are not forced to perform the same activity in the same manner and other modalities are used in order to bring about the same result.

According to Piagtian theory, the kindergarten child is in the preoperational stage of development. At this stage, the child is still egocentric, language continues to develop rapidly, is less dependant on sensorimotor action, and is able to internalize events more leading to thinking on a higher level (Morrison, 1988). All of the above leads to the child's readiness and cognitive growth.

Since language is still developing at a rapid pace, a child's listening skills also need to be addressed. "An individual's adequate development of listening skills is important for advanced learning and thinking" (Rubin, 1990:47). Listening skills carry over to other areas of the child's development and due to this, development in this area should not be ignored. Rubin further states

> ...most school activity is at the literal thinking level. Teachers must learn how to construct questions that call for interpretive, critical, and creative thinking. In addition, teachers must help students gain skill in question-asking techniques so that they can become more active consumers of information and independent thinkers (Rubin, 1990:14).

One school district instituted a junior kindergarten program in order to improve the children's chances of success.

> Junior kindergarten is a year-long alternative program for children of legal school age who are not developmentally ready for kindergarten - either socially, intellectually, emotionally, or physically. It is designed to prevent early failure syndrome (Galloway and George, 1986:68).

As a result of children participating in this program, success was anticipated although documentation is not available as of yet.

Teachers should be aware of their own modality strengths and predominant learning styles. By having this knowledge, the teacher can be more aware of the students in the class and the way in which they learn best. Barbe and Milone (1980) cite differences in classrooms when identifying classrooms as auditory, visual, or kinesthetic. When the teacher is predominantly an auditory learner, the classroom will be somewhat noisy due to talking being encouraged. Cassette recorders will be seen at each learning center and, instruction is mainly given verbally by the teacher. Kinesthetic and visual classrooms have completely different characteristics with the kinesthetic classroom facilitating movement and the visual classroom being very organized.

Dunn and Dunn (1984) cite ten ways in which to improve the classroom environment and make it one more conducive to learning.

Lighting, temperature, furniture, and noise level of the classroom must be taken into consideration by the teacher. Not all students learn best in a brightly lit classroom. Allowing for different areas in the room to be less lit is a reinforcer to some students who learn best in this type of environment. Other practices include: provide alternative approaches to following the teacher's directions; allow students to work alone, in pairs, or in groups; provide new information through student's primary modality and then secondary modality; allow students to work on difficult subjects when they are most receptive; and, teach globally as well as analytically.

> Students need to develop ways to capitalize on their stylistic strengths, but they also need to develop the ability to move from one style to another. A student who can never be anything anarchic is going to be severely disadvantaged in society as well as in school (Sternburg, 1990: 369-370).

It is known that one uses a particular style one is most comfortable with. "...students will seek learning activities that are compatible with their preferred styles - just as teachers will tend to teach in ways that are compatible with their own styles" (Sternberg, 1990:368). Therefore, it is important to provide students with various activities for the same lesson to allow the students to make a choice.

A study undertaken by Butler, DeRuzzo, Wollenberg, and Handley (1987), found when academically grouping second graders

homogeneously, the students spent more time on task. When students were heterogeneously grouped, time on task decreased. Students reading comprehension was also found to increase, although other areas such as mathematics revealed no significant change. "Since time-on-task is the best current predictor of achievement, it is understandable how the homogeneous group did better in achievement in reading comprehension" (Butler, DeRuzzo, Wollenberg, and Handley, 1987:24).

Nemiroff (1989) states it is important for teachers to know the predominant learning style they use in teaching as well as the learning styles of students in the class. When the learning styles are not taken into account, the kindergartner can become frustrated and easily get off task. "The kindergarten experience becomes one of anxiety and frustration rather than one in which the child is an active participant in the enjoyable process of learning" (Nemiroff, 1989:18).

Nemiroff further states the push for academics in kindergarten and the time factor for teachers has pushed kids behind who developmentally aren't ready for academics. "Developmentally age -appropriate practices and activities that address the learning style of the child need to be formulated" (Nemiroff, 1989:18). She cites it is important to (1) check where the child's developmental strengths

and weaknesses are, (2) identify the child's learning style, and (3) have the child play an active, not passive role in learning.

Nemiroff had four goals in her study which are as follows: (1) teach child through modality strength, (2) provide teachers and parents an understanding of developmental screening tests and developmental strengths and weaknesses, (3) educate teachers and parents about learning styles, and (4) provide teachers with activities to integrate learning styles with a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Lessons need to be taught several different ways so all modalities are addressed. Nemiroff at the beginning of her study gave students the Swassing-Barbe Modality Index. Results indicated most kindergartners are visual or auditory learners, not kinesthetic as so many have thought. By incorporating learning styles in developmentally appropriate lessons, results indicated improvement in students scores in developmental areas.

Solution Strategy

In a review of the literature, the writer noted the importance of how one learns. Barbe, Milone, and Nemiroff indicated in their research by having the teacher know her own learning style, she is more apt to understand not all children learn alike. Elkind stated children have different ways of learning and if the teacher ignores this fact, it will set children up for failure.

Students will gravitate towards activities best suited for their individual learning style as they are more comfortable with one style over another. Sternberg points out it is important to provide activities to the student in the secondary modalities as well. This allows for exposure and development in these learning styles without forcing the student to learn one specific way.

Researchers have also indicated it is best practice to teach the kindergarten child using a holistic rather than a parts to whole approach (Kitto, Vitale, Freeley and Perrin, Dunn and Dunn). When this is done, the students in the class are more apt to learn the subject being taught. Coinciding with the holistic approach to teaching is providing the students with various ways and methods to perform an activity (Albert, Freeley and Perrin, Sternberg).

Dunn and Dunn suggest changing the classroom environment and the teacher's manner in presenting lessons will lead to success in the classroom. Day and Drake indicate in their study having at least eight learning centers along with utilizing student contracts lends itself to more time on task behavior of kindergarten students. Because the writer is not the teacher of the target kindergarten class, the above would be impractical to implement. Time factors must also be considered as the teacher must cover certain basic skills during the school year.

Butler and others found when grouping second graders homeogeneously in academic groups, success was found. It is difficult to group kindergarten students homeogeneously. This is due to the fact that kindergartners are not at the same developmental stage and are still in a state of transition developmentally (Kitto).

Time on task has been shown to be a good indicator for future academic success. The writer concluded after reviewing research undertaken on keeping kindergarten students on task, that it is best practice to first, identify the student's predominant learning style and second, to incorporate activities using this learning style. Also, by providing a variety of activities (using secondary learning styles of student), the student will meet with success and be more apt to stay on task for a longer period of time.

CHAPTER III

Method

The implementation period covered a 12 week period in which the writer worked with children in the target group two times per week for half hour sessions. Specific activities were provided to this group with the students predominant learning style considered in planning the activities. Less dominant or secondary learning styles of the target group were also incorporated into the activities in order for the students to be exposed in these areas as well.

Prior to the implementation period, the writer met with the principal of the elementary school. The principal requested a list of the protocols be furnished that the writer would be using with the target group. This listing is in a letter (Appendix B:45) the writer sent to the principal. Following this, the principal sent a letter to all parents in the kindergarten class announcing the writer's involvement with the targeted class (Appendix C:47). No objectives were raised from the parents in this kindergarten class and the writer was able to proceed with the practicum study.

The teacher of the class used the Heath Reading Series and at the beginning of the writer's practicum study was teaching letters of the

alphabet and beginning sounds. As a supplement and review, the writer planned activities for the target group around these areas. Through teacher observation and report, it had been made known to the writer that the majority of the target group needed remediation in beginning sounds and alphabet letter identification.

Two locations were used by the writer and the target group two times per week for half hour sessions during the implementation period. These locations included the school's media center and a picnic area in the courtyard of the school. The latter area was used when the media center was not available. Distractions were noted in both locations and on a few occasions both areas were unavailable due to rain and staff at the school using the media center. Due to the areas used, students in the target group had difficulty staying on task due to distractions. It was felt by the writer both areas were not as conducive to the practicum study as they could have been but this was out of the writer's control.

The target group totalling seven students was divided into two groups for the half hour sessions with one group containing four students and the other group three students. By way of teacher observation, the groups were so designated. Prior to the implementation period, the students in the target group performed a specific kindergarten activity (Appendix D:49). This activity was

used as a pre-test and at the end of the 12 weeks, the target group performed the same activity again. Growth and performance level was determined by way of a teacher made checklist (Appendix E:51).

The first week of the implementation period the writer administered the Swassing-Barbe Modality Index to the target group. Results indicated three of the seven target group members were predominantly visual learners with the other four being auditory learners. Secondary learning styles for two of the three visual learners were auditory with one target group member having an equal percentage of auditory and kinesthetic as the secondary modality. The four auditory learners had the visual modality as the secondary learning style.

The second week of the implementation period, the writer learned three target group members had been moved to the three other kindergarten classes at the school permanently. This left four students remaining in the target group. As a result, the writer kept the members in one group and had half hour sessions with them twice a week. Following each session, the writer completed a log (Appendix F:53) in order to monitor progress, etc. of the sessions. During the second week, students reviewed the letter M. Activities included: M story read from Big Books, pasting macaroni on paper tracing the letter M, sketching a mountain, a story read about

monsters, and an experience chart made up by the target group (story about monsters). The writer served muffins and M & M candies to the target group also to further instill the letter M identification and beginning sound.

The third week the letter N was reviewed with nuts provided by the writer for the group. Noisy Nancy Norris was read to the group, nickle rubbings were performed and a picture memory game was also played. Pictures cut out from magazines beginning with the letter N was not done as few pictures were located. The writer substituted another activity which entailed the target group taking a walk on the school grounds to count the number of nests found.

During the fourth week, the writer reviewed the letter O with the target group. Oranges were served and activities included: underlining all the O's on a worksheet and experience chart, the book Owly read to group, Big Books O rhyme read, and students drew an ocean picture.

The letter P was reviewed the fifth week and popcorn was served to the target group. Members of the group planned a picnic by listing foods they would take on an experience chart (especially foods starting with the letter P). Also, penny rubbings, P Big Books rhyme read, and paper clips were fastened together in order to make a chain were performed. One of the sessions had to be cut short during this

week due to both locations being unavailable for use.

Two time on task sweeps made of the entire kindergarten class were taken the sixth week. The reader is referred to (Appendix G:55) for the results of these time sweeps.

The letter Q was reviewed the seventh week. Activities included: Big Books Q rhyme read, quarter rubbings, and students were engaged in making their own quilt with construction paper. It was noted by the writer the students thoroughly enjoyed the latter activity.

Week eight the letter R was reviewed with raisins being served to the target group. Since the group had not completed the quilts from the previous week, time was allotted during one of the two sessions for the quilts to be completed. Target group members drew rainbows and an R chart was developed by the group listing words beginning with the letter R.

The ninth week the letter S was reviewed. Soda was served to the target group and activities included: writer reading Sprocket, Dog Detective, group brainstorming to think of S words placed on a chart, circling S words on another chart, and students drawing an S picture with markers. Regarding the latter activity, the target group was given a choice of finding S pictures in magazines or drawing an S picture. The student chose the latter activity.

Week 10 had the target group working on the letter T. Activities

included: drawing a tent on paper, brainstorming to list foods starting with the letter T, an experience chart made up about turtles, and circling T words on a chart. One of the sessions was cut short due to staff using the media center and rain negating the use of the courtyard.

The eleventh week the letters M through T were reviewed. Target group members played alphabet bingo and were also asked to list on their own sheet of paper all the food words they could think of that the writer had brought in throughout the implementation period. If they were unable to remember all the foods, the writer asked them to think of other food words starting with letters M through T. The second session in this week the target group performed the post kindergarten activity (Appendix D:49).

During the last and twelfth week of the implementation period, the writer took two more time sweeps of the kindergarten class. Results are noted in (Appendix G:55).

Monitoring

Changes were made throughout the practicum study due to a variety of factors. These factors included: the weather, location used for sessions, target group's behavior, and the student's interest and non-interest in activities presented. The writer had no control over the weather and location used during the implementation period.

One time during the 12 week period, a session was cut short due to the student's behavior. Due to the writer only seeing the target group twice a week and not more, it was felt it took a longer period of time to gain the target group's trust and respect. Early into the 12 week period, the writer learned some of the planned activities (i.e. learning and singing songs) were felt by the target group to be too juvenile. Due to this, activities were changed in order to peak the group's interest. When possible, the writer offered choices of activities to the target group. This appeared to help maintain the student's time on task.

Daily logs (Appendix F:53) were completed by the writer which helped to monitor the student's work and progress. Throughout the sessions, the writer would have to prompt the group to stay on task as the student's were very distractible. Time was also spent in going over school rules such as walking quietly in the halls. Often times the writer would have the target group practice these rules.

Another monitoring condition was the two time sweeps taken by the writer in the sixth week of the implementation period. These time sweeps were compared to the initial time sweeps taken prior to the 12 week period (Appendix G:55).

Evaluation

In order to evaluate any progress made by the target group in

increasing time on task, the writer employed several methods. One method, the use of time sweeps, was utilized. If the target group progressed in staying on task 20 percent or more of the time determined by the results of the time sweeps, objective one had been met. These time sweeps of the entire kindergarten class were taken at three different times, once before the 12 week period started, another during the sixth week, and the last sweep occurring in the twelfth week. Each time a sweep was taken on two separate days. All time sweeps were tabulated, averaged, and then compared to one another in order to note any changes.

Another method, the pre-kindergarten activity, was performed again by the target group at the end of the 12 week period. Performance level of this activity was compared to the pre-kindergarten activity via the teacher made checklist. When the target group performed this activity the first time, it was noted the writer had to give numerous prompts in order for the students to remain on task. When it was performed at the end of the 12 weeks, minimal prompts had to be given by the writer. If a 20 percent improvement had been noted, it was felt objective two had been achieved.

The daily logs (Appendix F:53) kept by the writer following each session also helped in evaluating the target group's progress. Notes

and remarks were made for each session regarding the student's behavior, time on task, and overall performance. The writer's observation of the target group during the sessions and also the teacher's remarks regarding the student's behavior with time on task in the classroom was also taken into account.

Evaluation of objective three was learned by comparing the Kindergarten Student Progress Reports (second grading period) to the fourth grading period, specifically the subsection Work Habits. An increase of two or more S's (satisfactory) in this section would determine the target group's improvement in staying on task a longer amount of time, thereby meeting the objective.

The fourth objective had the target group use critical thinking skills in specific activities. By writing down the student's responses in brainstorming activities, the writer was able to determine whether or not the objective had been met.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Evaluation of the practicum study consisted of comparing the results of six time sweeps of the entire kindergarten class (Appendix G:55). Two of the time sweeps were taken prior to the implementation period, two more were taken in the sixth week, and the last two sweeps were taken in the twelfth week. The first set of time sweeps revealed the target group to have a 1.9 difference (lower amount) in time on task as compared to the rest of the kindergarten class. The second set of time sweeps revealed the target group had improved in remaining on task a longer period of time. At this time or during the sixth week, the target group showed only a 1.4 difference in their times as compared to the rest of the class. The final sweeps revealed a 0.9 difference in the target groups time on task, thereby revealing a 20 percent increase for time on task for the target group.

In viewing the time sweeps results, it was noted that one of the sweeps taken during the morning revealed a lower average time on task than sweeps taken in the afternoon. It is often thought students are at peak performance level in the morning but this particular time sweep showed otherwise. However, the reader should note this was

the only time results indicated such. Another factor which should be taken into consideration by the reader is the fact that the final time sweeps were taken one week before school was to be out in June. Students were anxiously awaiting the end of the school year.

In attempting to first determine how much time off task the target group was from the rest of the kindergarten class, the writer had difficulty in finding a measurement which would provide accurate data. The time sweep method was used as it was felt data would be obtained in order to compare the target group with the rest of the kindergarten class. The reader should note that a child may have been off task during the time sweeps but observed on task by the writer when the class was swept. In order to obtain precise on/off task times, there would have to be observations of each child in the class for specific periods of time. The writer was unable to do this because of the time factor not allowing it. The writer, therefore, attempted to be as consistent as possible in gathering data throughout the practicum study.

The second objective had the writer comparing the target group's performance on a kindergarten activity performed prior to the implementation period to performance on the same activity performed at the end of the eleventh week. In comparing the target

groups performance on the pre and post kindergarten activity, the writer found a noticeable improvement. One of the target group members obtained 100 percent on the teacher made checklist (Appendix E:51) with his performance on the post kindergarten activity. Two other target group members showed an increase of 20 percent on the checklist and one student was found to show no change. Minimal prompts were needed in order for the students to complete the same activity at the end of the eleventh week. It should be noted, however, that the writer stressed to the target group at the onset of the post kindergarten activity to listen very carefully to the directions given as they would not be repeated. When the students performed the pre kindergarten activity, prompting by the writer had to be done on a continual basis in order to keep the group on task.

The third objective was met by all of the target group members except for one member. The second grading period revealed three of the four target group members having five N's (Needs improvement) and the other member having three N's on the Work Habits section of the Kindergarten Student Progress Reports. The fourth grading period showed three of the four target group members increasing the number of S's (Satisfactory) to a total of seven or 100 percent on this section. One member of the target group increased the number of S's by only one for a total of six S's. The writer points out that this

particular student received an N on completing work in a reasonable length of time. Since the criteria for meeting this objective consisted of increasing the amount of S's by at least two or more, three/fourth's of the target group were able to show an increase.

In order for the critical thinking component to be a part of this practicum study, the writer involved the target group in activities in which they had to brainstorm. Activities such as creating an experience chart and listing all the foods members could think of starting with a particular letter were used in order for students to think creatively. The writer wrote down responses from the target group on such activities and 100 percent of the group were able to respond , thus meeting criteria for the fourth objective.

In reviewing the results of this practicum study, the writer noted goals were met in increasing the target groups time on task. Whether or not using the dominant learning style in the activities was the main reason this happened is difficult to discern. Members of the group were seen to mature more over the 12 week period and this could be a factor in the increased time on task. It also stands to reason when one spends individual time with a child, it affects other areas of the child's life as well.

The consistency of the writer's presence with the target group was felt by the teacher to have a positive effect on their performance and

behavior in the classroom. Target group members were reported by the teacher to all be on task more often than not throughout the school day and also were much calmer. The teacher also reported the individual attention given to the target group during the three month implementation period was a major factor. The reader should note that two of the four target group members will be going into a transitional first grade class the coming school year with the other two members entering a regular first grade class.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The practicum project will be shared with other kindergarten classes. Portions of the project which are relevant will also be shared with preschools and daycare centers the writer sees as a Child Find teacher on a regular basis. Besides the above, the writer will share relevant portions with parents of Child Find referrals. It is felt by sharing knowledge learned through the practicum project, others will benefit as well.

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PREP INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN
KINDERGARTEN

Name _____ School _____

Date of Entry _____ Screening Completed _____

Note checked (✓) areas only

___ Student's readiness skills appear to be adequate.

STUDENT IS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY:

___ interacting with adults (1)

___ understanding common vocabulary (3a,9)

___ expressing ideas orally (3b)

___ recalling orally presented information (4)

___ understanding and expressing relational concepts (5,10)

___ visually discriminating likenesses and differences (6)

___ recalling visually presented models (7)

___ using fine motor skills (8)

___ using gross motor skills

___ applying number concepts (11a, b)

BEHAVIORAL SCREENING

___ demonstrating self-confidence

___ interacting appropriately with others

___ demonstrating on-task behavior

STUDENT IS EXCELLING IN:

___ number knowledge (11b, c)

___ vocabulary development (10)

___ alphabet knowledge (12)

Teacher Name:

Strategies Implemented

(over)

To be Reviewed

Date:
Grade:

__Continue or __Change Assigned Strategies:

___ Preventive
___ Developmental
___ Enrichment

Problem(s):

Strategies/ Recommendations:

Teacher Initials ____

Ret: Master, 5 Y AFT Grad/Withd
Duplicates, OSA

007-86-ELM
Rev 7/87

PREP REVIEW

Name _____ School _____

To be Reviewed	To be Reviewed	To be Reviewed	To be Reviewed
Date: Grade:	Date: Grade:	Date: Grade:	Date: Grade:
___Continue or ___Change Assigned Strategies:	___Continue or ___Change Assigned Strategies	___Continue or ___Change Assigned Strategies:	___Continue or ___Change Assigned Strategies:
____ Preventive ____ Developmental ____ Enrichment	____ Preventive ____ Developmental ____ Enrichment	____ Preventive ____ Developmental ____ Enrichment	____ Preventive ____ Developmental ____ Enrichment
Problem(s):	Problem(s):	Problem(s):	Problem(s):
trategies/ Recommendations	Strategies/ Recommendations	Strategies/ Recommendations	Strategies/ Recommendations
acher Initials ____	Teacher Initials ____	Teacher Initials ____	Teacher Initials ____

EP ASSESSMENT

te	Test Results	Recommendations
	See Student Study Team Summary	Placement in: ___LSH ___SLD ___EH ___OT OTHER _____

PREP
checklist of
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL DEVELOPMENT
Kindergarten

Student Name _____ Date _____

	(Total "yes" responses)
A. SELF-CONFIDENCE	YES NO
1. Is overly sensitive to criticism	☐ ☐
2. Seeks excessive reassurance and support from teacher; asks if he/she is doing well; finds reason to be close	☐ ☐
3. Quits easily; reluctant to try new activities	☐ ☐
4. Makes negative comments about self; degrades his/her activities and work; indicates he/she is not doing well	☐ ☐
TOTAL	☐
B. INTERACTION WITH OTHERS	YES NO
1. Disrupts class	☐ ☐
2. Gets into fights, quarrels	☐ ☐
3. Leads or joins others in inappropriate behavior	☐ ☐
4. Defiant toward authority	☐ ☐
TOTAL	☐
C. TASK-RELATED BEHAVIOR	YES NO
1. Has difficulty staying on task for reasonable periods of time	☐ ☐
2. Is frequently out of seat	☐ ☐
3. Has difficulty concentrating; daydreams	☐ ☐
4. Unmotivated	☐ ☐
TOTAL	☐

"yes" response 0-2 = developmental
3-4 = preventive

Ret: Master, SY AFT Grad/Withd
Duplicates, OSA

006-86-ELM
Eff 7/86

Appendix B

Letter to Principal

January 16, 1991

Dear Dr.

Please find listed below the protocols I will be using with kindergarten class.

1. Writer's observation of class time on/off task (baseline data) and target group time on/off task.

2. The Swassing-Barbe Modality Index.

3. Writer's observation of student's performance on kindergarten tasks (i.e. sorting; classifying; following directions involving small muscle control (cutting, pasting, coloring); ability to see likeness/difference in objects and pictures; reproducing numbers, shapes; comparing objects of size, shape, color, etc.; sequencing; language comprehension). The above will be used to obtain pre and post test data.

4. Teacher's observation information.

In regards to obtaining permission from the parents, I feel it best if permission can be granted from all the parents rather than just a select group. This would help alleviate any singling out among the students.

Thank you for your attention to the above matter.

Sincerely,

Carolyn R. Vallarta

CRV:cr

Appendix C

Letter to kindergarten student's parents

Phone

Every Child A Winner. . . Every Day

January 28, 1991

Dear Families,

Ms. has a University Intern that will be working with her during the next several months. Carolyn Vallarta is a teacher in County who is working on an advanced degree. A research paper is part of her degree program. She will be measuring class time on/off task, student performance on Kindergarten tasks (sorting, classifying, sequencing, etc.), and individual student preference regarding learning styles. She may be working with some or all of the children. Ms. and I support her project and would be willing to answer any questions that you might have.

Thank you for your help and cooperation in this matter. With kindest regards, I remain,

Respectfully yours,

Dr.
Principal

/ljs

"a bright spot by the bay"

Name _____

M m

Kindergarten Pre/Post Activity

Name the key picture, *man*. Trace and write capital *M*'s and lowercase *m*'s. Then look carefully at the picture. Find the objects whose names begin with the sound for *m*, such as *moon*, *mitt*, and *mop*. Color or circle the pictures of those objects.
Use with Pupil Book B, page 8.

70

50

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix E

Teacher Checklist

	Completed	Did not complete
1. Follow verbal and visual directions by teacher 80%.		
2. Completes activity in 20 minutes or less.		
3. Writes name on paper.		

Appendix F

Biweekly Log

Date -

Length of session -

Activity/Skill taught -

Learning style used - Primary

Secondary

Remarks -

Appendix G

Time Sweeps Results

Procedure

Every five minutes for a thirty-five minute period, the class was swept by the writer. Using the classroom seating arrangement, the writer made a notation by each student seen on task. Seven denoted the full amount possible for being on task during the sweeps.

First time sweep - February 1991

target group - 3.8 rest of class - 5.7

1.9 difference

Second time sweep - April 1991 (sixth week)

target group - 4.8 rest of class - 6.2

1.4 difference

Final time sweep - May 1991 (twelfth week)

target group - 5.5 rest of class - 6.4

0.9 difference